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RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI IMMEDIATE 3994
RUEHOR/AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE 4516
RUEHGE/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN IMMEDIATE 0751
RUEHGR/AMEMBASSY GRENADA IMMEDIATE 0743
RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE 1390
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI IMMEDIATE 7583
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA IMMEDIATE 1049
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RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE 8494
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE 2692
RUEHLS/AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE 6810
RUEHTO/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE 2888
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE 5225
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE 9126
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 0127
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE 2108
RUEHOU/AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU IMMEDIATE 7645
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE 3170
RUEHPF/AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH IMMEDIATE 8511
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE 0763
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO IMMEDIATE 2868
RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE 9306
RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE 1217
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 8612
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE 5922
RUEHWD/AMEMBASSY WINDHOEK IMMEDIATE 5926
INFO RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 4353
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 STATE 097114

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KHIV](#) [UNGA](#) [EAID](#)
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE REQUEST: UNAIDS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

11. (U) This is an action request, see paras 4-7.

12. (SBU) Context: UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon will select a new Executive Director for the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) this fall to replace incumbent Dr. Peter Piot (Belgium). Ban has asked the UNAIDS co-sponsoring agencies to provide him with an unranked short list of three candidates, including at least one woman. The UNAIDS Board, which we currently chair, will provide input to the UNAIDS co-sponsoring agencies during an extraordinary session in Geneva on October 2, but the final decision will be made by Secretary General Ban.

13. (SBU) Although a short list of candidates is not yet available, we are aware of two serious contenders for the position: Mr. Michel Sidibe (Mali) and Ms. Debrework Zewdie (Ethiopia). We strongly support Mr. Sidibe, who is currently Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS. Mr. Sidibe is a proven leader in the international health arena, a strong proponent of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR),

and we believe he is the best candidate to carry forward the President's legacy on HIV/AIDS. At this point in time, his candidacy has broad support from the UN Security Council Permanent Members, Latin America, and the Middle East. Africa is not yet united behind a single candidate, as Ethiopia is vigorously promoting the candidacy of Ms. Zewdie, Director of the World Bank's Global AIDS Program.

14. (U) Posts are requested to lobby host governments to support Mr. Sidibe's candidacy, drawing from the points in paragraph 5. Governments that do support Sidibe's candidacy should be urged to convey this to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at as high a level as possible in the next few weeks.

Additional post-specific points are provided in paragraph 6. Translated points are not available. Posts are requested to report results of this demarche by September 17 so that we can ensure USG officials have up-to-date information prior to the opening of the UN General Assembly on September 22.

15. (U) Suggested talking points for all posts:

-- The United States is deeply committed to combating HIV/AIDS worldwide, working with both bilateral and multilateral partners to advance our shared health and development goals.

-- The UN system is a critical partner in this effort. We

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particularly value the contribution that the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has made in keeping AIDS on the political agenda, mobilizing resources, promoting the engagement of civil society partners, and providing technical assistance at the country-level under the leadership of Executive Director Peter Piot (Belgium).

-- UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon will appoint a new Executive Director in mid-October to replace Dr. Piot, who will step down at the end of December 2008.

-- We believe it is essential that Secretary General Ban select the strongest possible candidate to lead UNAIDS and build on its successes.

-- We believe Mr. Michel Sidibe (Mali) is the strongest of the candidates known to us. He has a proven record of leadership and success in fighting AIDS at the global level, including most recently as Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS.

-- Mr. Sidibe has proven his ability to manage UNAIDS' unique structure, bringing the entire international community, including the ten UNAIDS co-sponsoring agencies and NGO's as well as Member States together on key issues to deliver results on the ground.

-- Given this background, Mr. Sidibe's candidacy has support from a broad range of countries around the world, UNAIDS' co-sponsoring agencies, and non-governmental stakeholders. Mr. Sidibe's support base, which we believe is the broadest of all the candidates, will enable him to lead UNAIDS from a position of strength.

-- We urge your government to support Mr. Sidibe's candidacy and to reach out to Secretary General Ban at as high a level as possible in the coming weeks. We will be raising this with Secretary General Ban on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in late September.

16. (U) Post-specific points to supplement the points provided above:

EMBASSY PARIS:

-- We understand that Mr. Kouchner plans to convey your government's support for Mr. Sidibe's candidacy to Secretary

General Ban. We will also be lobbying Secretary General Ban at the highest levels.

-- We are concerned that lack of unified African support for
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Mr. Sidibe could hurt his candidacy, and urge your government to help build support for Mr. Sidibe's candidacy among the Francophonie as well as the EU.

EMBASSY BRUSSELS:

-- Much of UNAIDS' past success is due to the tremendous leadership of Executive Director Dr. Peter Piot (Belgium). His leadership will be sorely missed.

-- We believe that Mr. Sidibe is the best candidate to carry forward Dr. Piot's legacy and encourage your government to help build support for his candidacy, not only among EU members, but also among your allies in other regions.

EMBASSY BAMAKO:

-- We strongly support Mr. Sidibe's candidacy. We are interested to hear what your government is doing to promote his candidacy and how we can best support your efforts.

-- If you have not already done so, we strongly encourage your government to reach out to Secretary General Ban at the highest level to express your support for Mr. Sidibe's candidacy.

-- We also encourage you to send out a formal dipnote to UN Member States in support of Mr. Sidibe's candidacy as soon as possible.

EMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

-- We greatly appreciate your President's commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS and his attendance of the United Nations High level Event in June. We look forward to working in continued partnership with you in the fight against AIDS.

-- We strongly encourage your government to express its support for Mr. Sidibe's candidacy to Secretary General Ban at the highest possible level.

17. (U) If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact IO/T's Guinnevere Roberts at 202-647-4196 or robertsge@state.gov.

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